



PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the Application of:

WESTMAN

Group Art Unit: 2861

Application No.: 10/606,287

Examiner: Unassigned

Filed: June 26, 2003

Attorney Dkt. No.: 59643.00283

For: USER GROUP CREATION

CLAIM FOR PRIORITY UNDER 35 USC § 119

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

May 5, 2004

Sir:

The benefit of the filing dates of the following prior foreign application(s) filed in the following foreign country is hereby requested for the above-identified patent application and the priority provided in 35 U.S.C. §119 is hereby claimed:

UK Patent Application No. 0215012.6 filed on June 28, 2002 in the United Kingdom

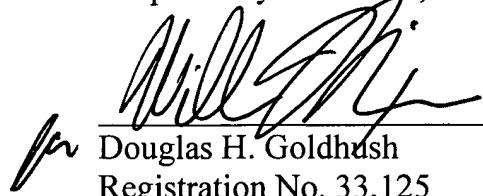
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Enclosure: Priority Document (1)

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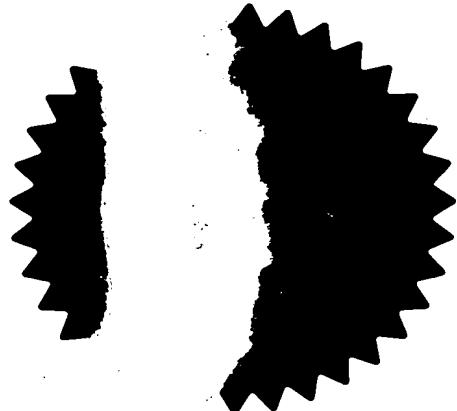
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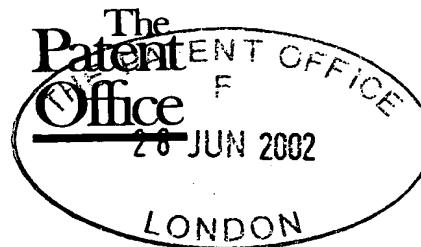
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3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (underline all surnames)	NOKIA CORPORATION KEILALAHDENTIE 4 02150 ESPOO FINLAND		
76522D 003			
Patents ADP number <i>(if you know it)</i>			
If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation	FINLAND		
4. Title of the invention	USER GROUP CREATION		
5. Name of your agent <i>(if you have one)</i>	PAGE WHITE & FARRER 54 DOUGHTY STREET LONDON WC1N 2LS UNITED KINGDOM		
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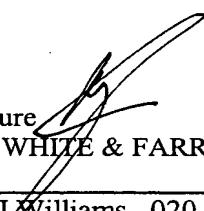
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11. I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

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Date

28 June 2002

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom

David J Williams 020 7831 7929

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4. Title of the invention	USER GROUP CREATION
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7.	<i>[Signature]</i> Date 14 Oct 2003
8. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom	David John Williams (020) 7831-7929

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Finland

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User Group CreationField of the Invention

The present invention relates to the provision of user groups for mobile terminals, and particularly but not exclusively to the provision of temporary user groups in localised areas.

Background to the Invention

The creation of user groups, sometimes referred to as buddy lists, is well known. In the art of computer networking, user groups provide for services such as instant messaging.

It has been proposed that such user groups may be provided for in mobile communications networks, to provide user groups between users of terminals in the network. Given the nature of mobile communications networks, it has been proposed that it would be advantageous to create temporary user groups, where users that are temporarily located in a particular local area, such as attending a conference, may be brought together in a temporary user group.

Such proposed techniques rely upon network location algorithms in the mobile communications network in order to determine the locations of mobile terminals, and then provide information to a conference provider or such like that pays the mobile communications network service for the identities of the mobile terminals in the conference area.

It is an aim of the present invention to provide an improved technique for creating user groups in mobile terminal communities, and particularly for creating temporary user groups.

Summary of the Invention

According to the present invention there is provided a method of establishing a user group amongst a plurality of mobile terminals, comprising: receiving at a host device, from at least one of the plurality of mobile terminals, an identity associated with each said mobile terminal; and grouping or collecting, at the host device, the identities associated with the mobile terminals, to thereby establish a user group, wherein the said at least one mobile terminal transmits the said associated identities to the host device 10 on a local communication link.

Preferably the user group is a temporary user group.

The host device is preferably associated with a mobile communications network, the method further comprising the step of transmitting the user group to the mobile 15 communications network. The mobile communications network may further communicate with the mobile terminals in the user group.

The method may further comprise dynamically updating the user group. The step of dynamically updating the user group 20 may include receiving, at the host device, an identity associated with a mobile terminal, and adding said identity to the user group. The step of dynamically updating the user group may further include deleting an identity from the user group.

25 The method may further comprise storing the user group. The user group may be stored with a characteristic to identify the group. The characteristic may be at least one of a date stamp; a time stamp; a location stamp.

30 The plurality of mobile devices may transmit their associated identities to the host device responsive to a request for their associated identity from the host device,

wherein the host device transmits said request on a local communication link. The request from the host device may be a broadcast signal.

The host device may include a mobile terminal.

- 5 The method may further comprise the step, after said grouping step, of transmitting the identities of the user group to the plurality of terminals.

The local communication link may be a short-range communication link. The short-range communication link may 10 be a radio communication link. The radio communication link may be a Bluetooth link.

Each of the plurality of mobile terminals may be associated with a mobile telecommunications network.

- 15 The host device may be a mobile terminal. The host device may be a dedicated control unit. The host device may be a computer.

According to a further aspect of the present invention there is further provided a device for establishing a user group amongst a plurality of mobile terminals, including: means 20 for receiving an identity associated with each of the mobile terminals, said means being adapted to receive the identities on a local communication link; and means for grouping or collecting the associated identities to thereby establish a user group.

- 25 The local communication link may be a short-range communication link. The short range communication may be a radio link. The radio link may be a Bluetooth link. The short range communication link may be an infra-red link.

30 The device may further include means for communicating with a mobile communication system, and means for transmitting

the user group to said mobile communication system. The device may further comprise means for storing one or more user groups.

The device may comprise a mobile telephone, a host control
5 device, or a computer system.

In a still further aspect the present invention provides a mobile communications system including a device for establishing a user group amongst a plurality of mobile terminals of the system, including a host device for
10 receiving an identity associated with each of the mobile terminals, said host device being adapted to receive the identities on a local communication link, and said host device further being adapted to group or collect the associated identities to thereby establish a user group.

15

Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawing, in which:

Figure 1 illustrates an example scenario in which the
20 present invention may be implemented; and

Figure 2 illustrates the main elements of a host device for implementing the invention.

Description of Preferred Embodiments

The present invention is described herein with reference to
25 a particular example. However it will be understood by one skilled in the art that the invention is not limited to the example given, and may be more broadly applied.

For the purposes of describing an example to understand the present invention, an example is given of creating a

temporary user group, or buddy list, in a conference environment.

Referring to Figure 1, the conference environment is generally designated by the dashed area 102. The area 102 represents a physical area within which the conference is being held, such as a hotel complex, and more particularly a room of the hotel complex.

The conference provider, wishing to establish a temporary user group amongst attendees of the conference, has a computer terminal 104 which is connected via communication lines 108 to a local transmitter/receiver 106. In this preferred embodiment, the local transmitter/receiver 106 is a Bluetooth transmitter/receiver, transmitting and receiving radio signals over a short distance in a localised area, i.e. the area 102 of the conference. Whilst a Bluetooth link is proposed in this exemplary embodiment, in general a short range or local communication link is used. More generally, the invention advantageously uses a communication link not requiring access to a wireless network infrastructure of a mobile communication system. In a particularly preferred embodiment, the transmitter/receiver 106 is provided in a doorway through which attendees enter the conference.

For the purposes of the present invention, it is assumed that attendees have a mobile terminal such as a mobile telephone. For the sake of example two mobile terminals 110 and 112 are shown in Figure 1 in the conference area. However in practice a larger number of mobile terminals may be provided.

Each of the mobile terminals is associated with a mobile communications network, preferably an intelligent network. That is, each of the mobile terminals 110 and 112 is

- ordinarily connected in a mobile network for the purpose of making and receiving calls, and possibly for the purposes of data transfer. In Figure 1 there is shown, above the dashed line 114, elements of a mobile communication network such as
- 5 which the terminals 110 and 112 may be connected in. A detailed explanation of such network, or of the connections of the terminals 110 and 112 in such network, is outside the scope of the present invention and will be familiar to one skilled in the art.
- 10 In brief, a serving call state control function (S-CSCF) 118 associated with, for example, the mobile terminal 110 provides services associated with an application server 122 via communication links 126. Other services may be provided by other application servers, such as 120. The application
- 15 server 122 offers services which need presence information, and obtains presence information from a presence server 116 via communication lines 124. The presence server stores information, e.g. the identity, concerning the mobile terminals present in the network. It also stores information about who is allowed to access the presence information. If the presence server has not previously needed this information it may fetch it from one or more other servers.
- In accordance with the present invention, each of the mobile terminals 110 and 112 is provided with an additional
- 25 communication link, additional to the communication links to the mobile communication network with which it is associated, which is compatible with the communication link provided by the transmitter/receiver 106.
- In the preferred embodiment, the communication links of the
- 30 mobile terminals 110 and 112 are open to receive broadcast messages from the transmitter/receiver 106. In the example

of Figure 1, the computer controls the transmitter/receiver 106 to broadcast a registration request. On entering the conference room, or in being present in the conference room, the terminals 110 and 112 receives the registration request 5 signal on their local communication link.

Provided that the mobile terminals 110 and 112 are configured by their users to respond to such a request, then the mobile terminals 110 and 112 respond to the registration request by providing identification information to the 10 computer 104 via the transmitter/receiver 106.

In this way, the computer groups or collects information as to the identity of the mobile terminals present at the conference. The mobile terminals may return the identity to the computer 104 as the number associated to the mobile 15 telephone, as a user identity of the mobile communication network, as the unique network identification code (IMEI number) or other information.

In a preferred embodiment, the mobile terminals respond to the registration request with the number associated with 20 the mobile terminal. Thereafter, the computer 104 groups or collects a user group consisting of all users who have registered, and possibly transmits the group back to the mobile terminals 110 and 112 using the local communication link. Thereby a user group is quickly and simply created 25 without any need for network communication. Avoiding network access to create a user group in this way minimises costs.

In an embodiment, the information provided to the computer 104 may be edited before creation of the user group, or multiple user groups may be created, or new information may 30 be merged to an existing group. For example, multiple user groups may be created according to identification

information provided by the mobile terminals. Such information may be pre-stored in the mobile terminals or on one or more chips or such like that can be inserted in the mobile terminal and may include the identity of the user's 5 specific interests. Such information may also be obtained at the registration by asking one or more questions, and thus the user's answers could be obtained.

In a further embodiment, the user group or groups is/are grouped or collected by the computer 104 and not transmitted 10 to the mobile terminals, but rather used by the computer 104 to transmit specific information such as announcements by way of local broadcasts using the transmitter/receiver 106.

In a further embodiment, the computer 104 may have a connection to a mobile communication network (not shown). 15 Such connection may be via fixed landlines, or via a mobile terminal connection. In such embodiment the computer may transmit the grouped or collected user group list to the network, and the network may use that information to provide networks services to the mobile terminals identified in the 20 group that are specific to the conference. That may be particularly advantageous where the local communication link is used to detect the presence of a user, for instance as they enter a doorway, but where the local communication link is not powerful enough to communicate with the user 25 thereafter. It is also advantageous if the group is used e.g. for sending a message, advertisement or such like to the members of the conference after it has finished.

The user groups may be dynamically updated based on new 30 mobile terminals entering the area 102. The list may be dynamically updated by deleting mobile terminals which leave the area 102. For example if the transmitter/receiver 106 is

in a doorway, the mobile terminal may send a local communication signal as the user leaves a room. Alternatively the computer may periodically update the list, if the local link is powerful enough, by requesting the 5 mobile terminals to confirm their presence.

The computer 104 may also not only keep a user group of who is currently at the conference, but also keep a user group of who has been at the conference today, in the last week etc. The computer or a mobile terminal may then continue to 10 provide those mobile terminals with services via the mobile communication network in which they are normally connected. For example, the computer or a mobile terminal could send SMS messages to the mobile terminals in the group.

Whilst the present invention has been described hereinabove 15 by way of reference to a conference example, it is more generally applicable. For example the invention may be utilised in a restaurant. The owner of a restaurant may then, for example, be able to access a user group of everyone who was in the restaurant on Wednesday night, to 20 notify them of a special offer, e.g. by text message, the next Wednesday night.

Thus, user groups maybe stored with a characteristic to identify the group, such as a date stamp, a time stamp, a location stamp, for future use.

25 Furthermore, the functionality of the local transmitter/receiver 106, and computer 104, may not be provided by a fixed transmitter/receiver and a computer. Alternatively they may be simply provided by a further mobile terminal.

30 For example, if a group of users with mobile terminals are in a room, a first user may select a menu option on their

mobile terminal to create a temporary user group or buddy list. Responsive thereto, the mobile terminal sends an optional registration request on a local transmission link, which is received by all mobile terminal within range of the 5 local transmission link. The user of any such mobile terminal may then make a selection on the menu on the mobile terminal to send their identification to the first user, e.g. by selecting a send public user identity button on the screen.

10 The first user then groups or collects the user group based on the replies, and optionally transmits it to all the other users. In this way a user group is simply created on a single mobile terminal, and then provided to all mobile terminals. Each individual user may then send the user group 15 list to their mobile network for use e.g. by the presence and/or message and/or group and/or similar servers therein to provide user group services.

It should be noted that the creation of the user group does not require any network access, and therefore does not 20 require the mobile terminals to be connected in the mobile communication network.

The local transmission link is preferably any short range communication link, for example a Bluetooth link, an infrared link, or other short-range media. However, any 25 appropriate transmission link may be used.

Referring to Figure 2, there is illustrated in block diagram form an example of a host device for implementing the present invention. The example host device is generally illustrated by reference numeral 200, and includes a control 30 block 202, a memory block 208, a first input/output device 204 and a second input/output device 206.

The first input/output device 204 is preferably a communication device for communicating with a mobile communications network, as described in embodiments hereinabove. Thus the first input/output device maybe a 5 GSM, GPRS, UMTS compatible communication device, for example. The first input/output device 204 communicates with the mobile communications network (not shown) via communications link 216.

The second input/output device 206 is preferably a Bluetooth communication device, for communicating with the mobile terminals, such as terminals 110 and 112, in the local area. The second input/output device 206 communicates with the mobile devices via a Bluetooth link 218. As discussed hereinabove, the input/output device 206 may in fact support different short-range communications. 10 15

The control block 202 controls the host device to perform the techniques of the present invention as described hereinabove. The memory 208 stores the user groups created by the host device. As discussed hereinabove, the memory may store a plurality of user groups, preferably corresponding 20 to past user groups, as well as any current user groups.

The control block controls access to memory 208 via lines 210. The control block further controls the first input/output device 204 via control lines 214, and the 25 second input/output device via control lines 212.

The host device 200 maybe implemented as a dedicated control device. Alternatively the host device may be a mobile terminal such as a mobile telephone. In such case the input/output blocks 204 and 206 are provided by the normal communication means of the terminal. Similarly the control 30 block 202 and the memory 208 maybe implemented using the

normal components of the terminal. In a further alternative, the host device may be implemented in a computer system, or a computer system associated with a mobile telephone. Such a computer system may, for example, be PDA.

- 5 Whilst the invention has been described herein with reference to particular examples, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art how the invention may be more broadly applied. The scope of the invention is determined by the appended claims.

Claims

1. A method of establishing a user group amongst a plurality of mobile terminals, comprising: receiving at a host device, from at least one of the plurality of mobile terminals, at least one identity associated with each said terminal; and grouping or collecting, at the host mobile terminal; and grouping or collecting, at the host device, the identities associated with the mobile terminals, to thereby establish a user group, wherein the at least one of said mobile terminals transmit the said associated identities to the host device on a local communication link.
5
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the user group is a temporary user group.
3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the host device is associated with a mobile communications network,
15 further comprising the step of transmitting the user group to the mobile communications network.
4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the mobile communications network further communicates with the mobile terminals in the user group.
20
5. A method according to any preceding claim, further comprising dynamically updating the user group.
6. A method according to claim 5 wherein the step of dynamically updating the user group includes receiving, at the host device, at least one identity associated with a
25 mobile terminal, and adding said identity to the user group.
7. A method according to claim 5 or claim 6 wherein the step of dynamically updating the user group includes deleting an identity from the user group.
30

8. A method according to any preceding claim, further comprising storing the user group.
9. A method according to claim 8 wherein the user group is stored with a characteristic to identify the group.
- 5 10. A method according to claim 9 wherein the characteristic is at least one of a date stamp; a time stamp; a location stamp.
11. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the plurality of mobile devices transmit their associated identities to the host device responsive to a request for their associated identity from the host device, wherein the host device transmits said request on a local communication link.
- 10 12. A method according to claim 11 wherein the request from the host device is a broadcast signal.
13. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the host device includes a mobile terminal.
14. A method according to any preceding claim further comprising the step, after said grouping step, of transmitting the identities of the user group to the plurality of terminals.
- 20 15. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the local communication link is a short-range communication link.
- 25 16. A method according to claim 15 wherein the short-range communication link is a radio communication link.
17. A method according to claim 16 wherein the radio communication link is a Bluetooth link.

18. A method according to any preceding claim wherein each of the plurality of mobile terminals is associated with a mobile telecommunications network.
19. A method according to any preceding claim wherein 5 the host device is a mobile terminal.
20. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 18 wherein the host device is dedicated control unit.
21. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 18 wherein the host device is a computer.
- 10 22. A device for establishing a user group amongst a plurality of mobile terminals, including: means for receiving an identity associated with each of the mobile terminals, said means being adapted to receive the identities on a local communication link; and means for grouping or collecting the associated identities to thereby establish a user group.
- 15 23. A device according to claim 22 wherein the local communication link is a short-range communication link.
24. A device according to claim 23 wherein the short range communication is a radio link.
- 20 25. A device according to claim 24 wherein the radio link is a Bluetooth link.
26. A device according to claim 23 wherein the short range communication link is an infra-red link.
- 25 27. A device according to any one of claims 22 to 26 further including means for communicating with a mobile communication system, and means for transmitting the user group to said mobile communication system.

28. A device according to any one of claims 22 to 27 further comprising means for storing one or more user groups.
29. A device according to any one of claims 22 to 28
5 comprising a mobile telephone.
30. A device according to any one of claims 22 to 28 comprising a host control device.
31. A device according to any one of claims 22 to 30 comprising a computer system.
- 10 32. A mobile communications system including a device for establishing a user group amongst a plurality of mobile terminals of the system, including a host device for receiving an identity associated with each of the mobile terminals, said host device being adapted to receive the identities on a local communication link, and said host device further being adapted to group or collect the associated identities to thereby establish a user group.

Abstract

There is disclosed a method of establishing a user group amongst a plurality of mobile terminals, comprising:
5 receiving at a host device, from at least one of the plurality of mobile terminals, an identity associated with each of said mobile terminals; and grouping or collecting, at the host device, the identities associated with the mobile terminals, to thereby establish a user group, wherein the at least one said mobile terminal transmits said 10 associated identities to the host device on a local communication link.

[Figure 1]



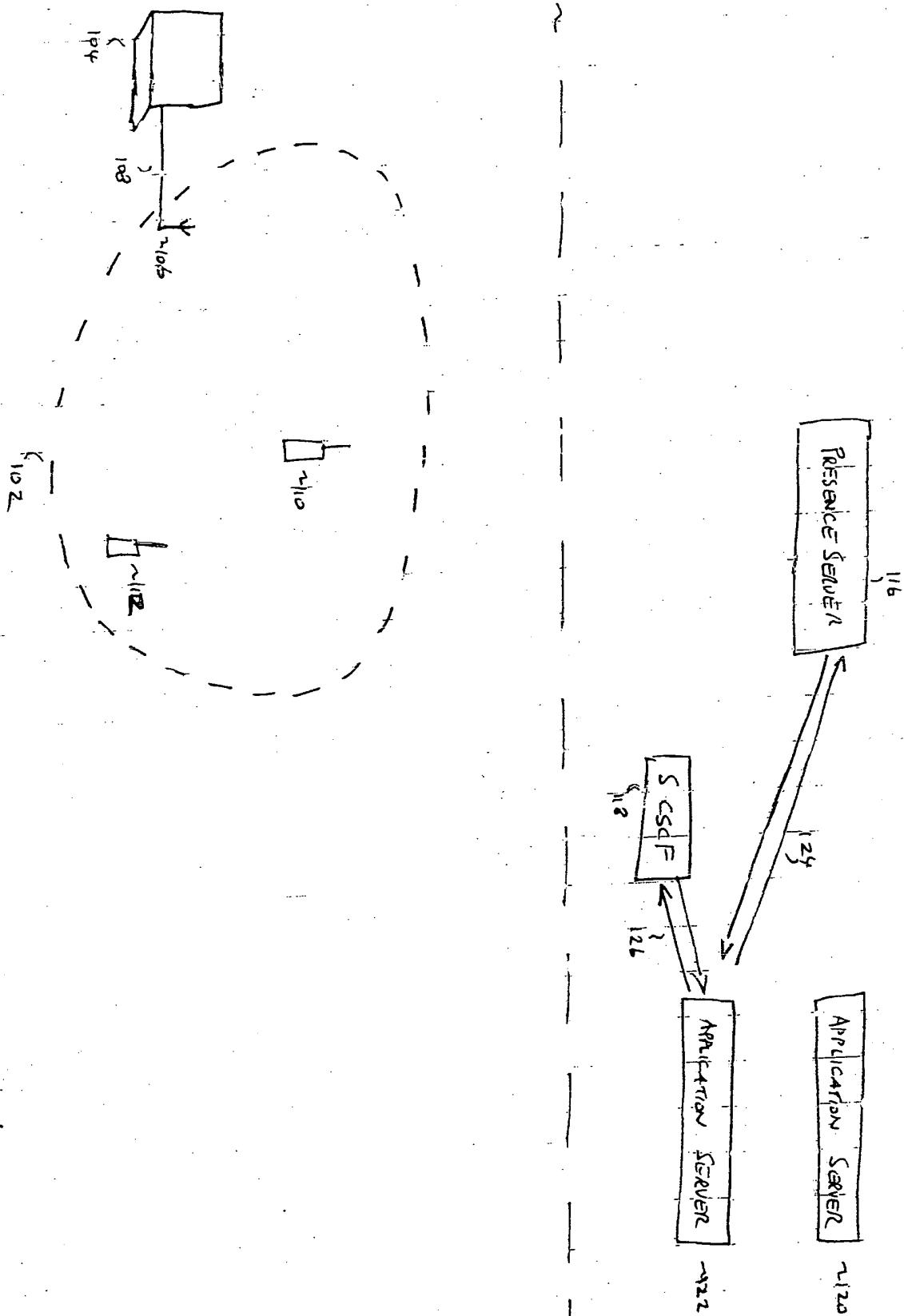
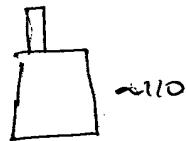
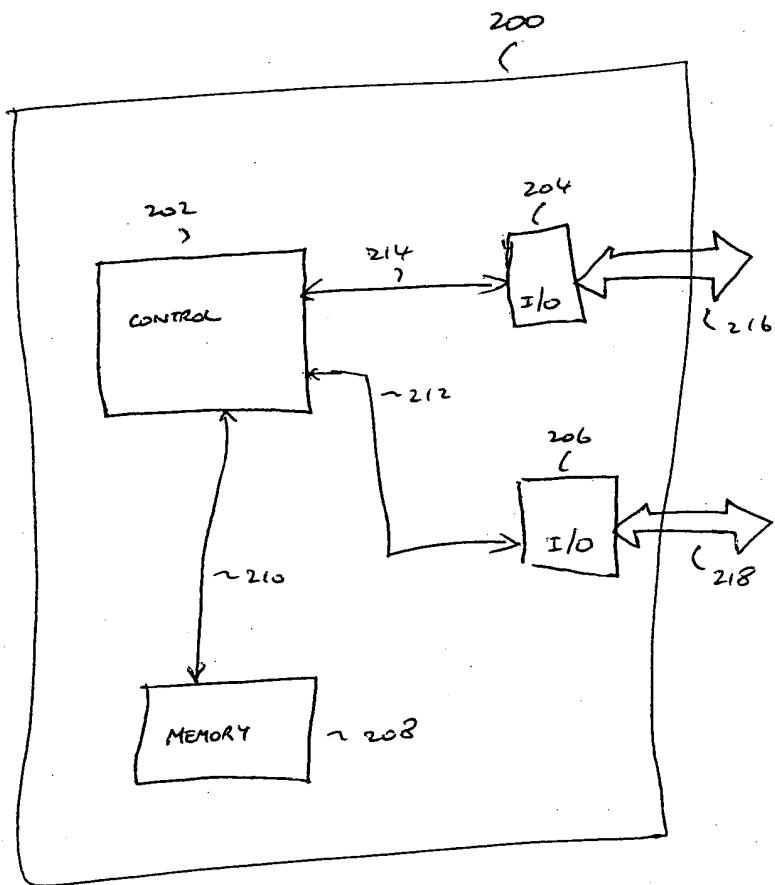


FIG 1



2/2



~110



~112

FIG 2

